



COMPOST TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

Problem	Cause	Cure
Foul Odor	Too wet	Mix pile or add coarse, dry material (straw, chips, dry leaves) and mix
	Not enough air	Turn pile
	Too much nitrogen	Add more brown (high carbon) materials and mix.
Pile not heating	Pile too small	Build larger pile
	Pile too dry	Mix pile and add moisture
	Poor aeration	Mix pile
	Not enough nitrogen	Add more green (high nitrogen) material and mix
	Materials too coarse	Chop or shred materials
Pile is damp and sweet smelling but will not heat up	Not enough nitrogen	Add more green material
The pile is damp and warm in the middle, but nowhere else	Pile is too small	Collect more material and mix with old material to make new pile
The pile is damp and sweet smelling but still will not heat up	Lack of nitrogen	Mix in nitrogen material and turn pile
The center of the pile dry	Not enough water	Moisten material while turning the pile
Pile too hot (over 140 degrees)	Pile too large	Make a smaller pile
	Not enough ventilation	Mix pile
Pile attracting animal or insect pests	Wrong materials used in pile	Remove all meat and dairy products
	Kitchen waste on surface of pile	Bury kitchen waste in pile. May want to cover tops of pile with one inch layer of garden soil or finished compost.